

II. The Claims:

The claims are amended to address minor matters of form not affecting claim scope. No new matter is presented and no additional search is required. A complete listing of the claims is provided for the Examiner's convenience. Claims 33, 34, 36, 38, 40, 41, 44, 49, 51, 52 and 55 are amended below.

1-30. *(Cancelled)*.

31. *(Previously Presented)* A coated chewing gum comprising a core of chewing gum and a coating, wherein said coating comprises one or more coating materials and one or more flavor(s), said flavor(s) being in the form of a powder when applied to the coating and at least one flavor is a natural vegetable flavoring agent comprising intact cells of a dried fruit or herb.

32. *(Cancelled)*.

33. *(Currently Amended)* The method according to claim 55, wherein the at least one natural vegetable flavoring agent has a water content of less than 75% by weight.

34. *(Currently Amended)* The method according to claim 55, wherein the water content of the at least one natural vegetable flavoring agent is less than 15% by weight.

35. *(Cancelled)*.

36. *(Currently Amended)* The method according to claim 55, wherein the at least one natural vegetable flavoring agent was extracted from one or more vegetables each selected from the group consisting of a coconut, a grape fruit, an orange, a lime, a lemon, a mandarin, a pineapple, a strawberry, a raspberry, a mango, a passion fruit, a kiwi, an apple, a pear, a peach, an apricot, a cherry, a grape, a banana, a cranberry, a blueberry, a black currant, a red currant, a gooseberry, a lingonberry, thyme, a basil, a

valerian, a fennel, a parsley, a camomile, a tarragon, a lavender, a dill, a cumin, a bergamot, a sage, an aloe vera, a spearmint, a peppermint, and an eucalyptus.

37. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the natural vegetable flavoring agent has been freeze-dried.

38. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the at least one natural vegetable flavoring agent is in the form of a powder, said powder comprising a particle having a particle size of at most 3 mm, calculated as the longest dimension of the particle.

39. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein said powder consists essentially of particles having a particle size from 3 μ m to 2 mm, calculated as the longest dimension of the particle.

40. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the at least one natural vegetable flavoring agent comprises seed from a fruit.

41. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the at least one natural vegetable flavoring agent also provides the gum formulation with natural color.

42. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the coating furthermore comprises a flavor selected from the group consisting of peppermint, periwinkle, eucalyptus, spearmint, anethol, menthol, powdered anise, orange, lemon, mango, pineapple, lime, strawberry, cherry, black currant, blueberry, raspberry, wild berry, cranberry, apple, pear, banana, prune, and plum flavor.

43. **(Cancelled).**

44. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 55, wherein the coating furthermore comprises an active substance selected from the group consisting of a high potency sweetener and an acid.
45. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 44, wherein said active substance is in the form of a powder when applied to the coating.
46. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 44, wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of a citric acid, a malic acid, a tartaric acid, a lactic acid, and an ascorbic acid.
47. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 44, wherein the high potency sweetener is selected from the group consisting of aspartame, acesulfame K, saccharin, cyclamate, neohesiridine, thaumatin, glycyrrhizin, monellin, sucrolase, and alitame.
48. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the coating furthermore comprises at least one functional substance, each selected from the group consisting of vitamins, cooling agents and flavor enhancers.
49. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 48, wherein the at least one functional substance is in the form of a powder when applied to the coating.
50. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 44, wherein the active substance is in an encapsulated form when applied to the coating.
51. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 50, wherein the encapsulated active substance is encapsulated in one or more material(s) each selected from the group consisting of fatty substances, waxes, gelatine, gum arabic,

starch, cellulose, cellulose derivatives, shellac, polyvinyl acetate, polyethylene, casein, zein, B cyclodextrine, silica, and yeast cells.

52. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the coating furthermore comprises one or more active substances(s), incorporated into the coating while in liquid form, each of said one or more active substance substance(s) each being selected from the group consisting of a flavor, a high potency sweetener and an acid.

53. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the coating furthermore comprises at least one salt.

54. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 53, wherein each salt is selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, ammonium chloride, sodium bicarbonate, and carbamide.

55. **(Currently Amended)** A method of preparing a coated chewing gum, the method comprising the following steps:

- 1) providing a core of chewing gum, a coating suspension, and a at least one natural vegetable flavoring agent in the form of a dry powder, where said natural vegetable flavoring agent is a powder of a dried fruit or a dried herb,
- 2) applying the coating suspension onto the ~~cores~~ core of chewing gum,
- 3) applying, in one or more increment(s), said at least one ~~said~~ natural vegetable flavoring agent onto the coated cores of chewing gum resulting from step 2) said agent being and remaining in the form of a powder throughout said applying step, and optionally repeating steps 2) and 3).

56. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the coating suspension comprises an aqueous solution, said aqueous solution comprising a

component selected from the group consisting of a sugar, a sugar alcohol, an artificial sweetener or a mixture thereof.

57. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the coating suspension comprises an aqueous solution of one or more constituent(s) selected from the group consisting of saccharose, dextrose, sorbitol, xylitol, tagatose, mannitol, maltitol, isomalt, aspartame, acesulfame K, saccharine, cyclamate, taline, and neohesperidine.

58. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the coating suspension is applied in 2 to 90 increments.

59. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the flavoring agent is applied to the coating in 1 to 10 increment(s) between the dosages of the coating suspension.

60. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 55 wherein, during step 3), the natural vegetable flavoring agent is embedded, in the coating, in solid form.